

# CALENDAR OF THE EGYPTIAN FARMER BOOK in

first day of the first month Thoth was theoretically supposed to date from the heliacal rising of the bright star, and in all probability it really did so when the official or civil year of three hundred and sixty-five days was first instituted. But the miscalculation which has been already explained<sup>1</sup> had the effect of making the star to shift its place in the calendar by one day in four years. Thus if Sirius rose on the first of Thoth in one year, It would rise on the second of Thoth four years afterwards, on the third of Thoth eight years afterwards, and so on until after the lapse of a Siroic or Sothic period of fourteen hundred and sixty solar years the first of Thoth again coincided with the heliacal rising of Sirius.<sup>2</sup> This observation of the gradual displacement of

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mann und J. Partsch, *Physikalische Geographic von Griechenland* (Breslau, 1885), pp. 96 *sqq.* On the top of Mount Pelion in Thessaly there was a sanctuary of Zeus, where sacrifices were offered at the rising of Sirius, in the height of the summer, by men of rank, who were chosen by the priest and wore fresh sheep-skins. See [Dicaearchus,] "Descriptio Graeciae," *Geographi Graeci Minores*, ed. C. Miiller, i. 107; *Historicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, ed. C. Miiller, ii. 262.

<sup>1</sup> Above, pp. 24 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> We know from Censorinus (*De die natali*, xxi. 10) that the first of Thoth coincided with the heliacal rising of Sirius on July 20 (Julian calendar) in the year 139 A.D. Hence

reckoning backwards by Sothic periods of 1460 solar years we may infer that Sirius rose on July 20th (Julian calendar) in the years 1321 B.C., 2781 B.C., and 4241 B.C.; and accordingly that the civil or vague Egyptian year of 365 days was instituted in one of these years. In favour of supposing that it was instituted either in 2781 B.C. or 4241 B.C., it may be said that in both these years the rising of Sirius nearly coincided with the summer solstice and the rising of the Nile; whereas in the year 1321 B.C. the summer solstice, and with it the rising of the Nile, fell nineteen days before the rising of Sirius and the first of Thoth. Now when we

consider the close causal  
connexion

which the Egyptians traced  
between  
the rising of Sirius and the  
rising of  
the Nile, it seems probable that  
they  
started the new calendar on  
the first  
of Thoth in a year in which the  
two  
natural phenomena coincided  
rather  
than in one in which they  
diverged  
from each other by nineteen  
days.  
Prof. Ed. Meyer decides in  
favour of  
the year 4241 B.C. as the date  
of the  
introduction of the Egyptian  
calendar  
on the ground that the  
calendar was  
already well known in the Old  
King-  
dom. See L. Ideler, *op. cit.* i.  
125  
*sqq.*; F. K. Ginzel, *op. cit.* i. 192  
*sqq.*;  
Ed. Meyer, <sup><c</sup> Nachtriige zur  
agypt-  
tischen Chronologic,"  
*Abhandlungm*  
*der konigl. Preuss. Akademie*  
*der*  
*Wissenschaften*, 1907 (Berlin,  
1908),  
pp. II *sq.* ; *id.*, *Geschichte des*  
*Alter-*  
*tums\** i. 2. pp. 28 *sqq.*) 98  
*sqq.*  
When the fixed Alexandrian  
year was  
introduced in 30 B.C. (see  
above, pp.  
27 *sq.*) the first of Thoth fell  
on  
August 29, which accordingly  
was  
thenceforth reckoned the first  
day of  
the year in the Alexandrian  
calendar.  
See L. Ideler, *op. cit.* i. 153 *sqq.*  
The  
period of 1460 solar or 1461  
movable  
Egyptian years was variously  
called a  
Sothic period (Clement of  
Alexandria,  
*Strom.* i. 21. 136, p. 401 ed.  
Potter),  
a Canicular year (from *Canic-*  
*ula.*) "the  
Dog-star," that is, Sirius), a  
heliacal  
year, and a year of God  
(Censorinus,  
*De die natali*, xviii. 10). But  
there is  
no evidence or probability  
that the